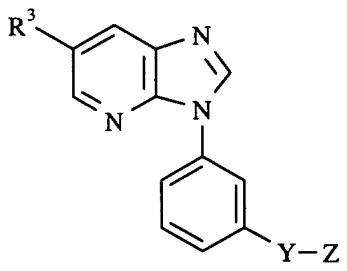
AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please cancel Claims 1-7 and 9-10 without prejudice and insert therefor new Claims 11-20. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1-10. (canceled)

11. (new) A compound of formula I, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or a prodrug thereof:



(I)

wherein

Y represents a chemical bond, or a methylene (CH_2), carbonyl (C=O), thiocarbonyl (C=S) or amide (CONH or NHCO) linkage;

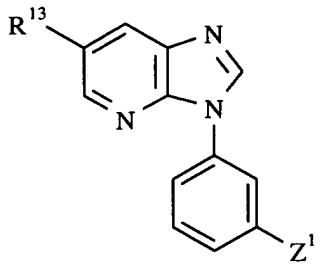
Z represents an optionally substituted phenyl, heteroaryl or heteroaryl(C_{1-6})alkyl group, wherein heteroaryl is selected from the group consisting of pyridine, pyrrolidine, imidazole and thiophene, or a group of formula $-NR^1R^2$;

R^1 and R^2 independently represent hydrogen, hydrocarbon or a heterocyclic group wherein the heterocyclic group is selected from the group consisting of pyridine, pyrrolidine, imidazole and thiophene; or R^1 and R^2, together with the intervening nitrogen atom, represent an

optionally substituted heterocyclic ring selected from azetidinyl, pyrrolidinyl, piperidinyl, piperazinyl, morpholinyl and thiomorpholinyl; and

R^3 represents phenyl or furanyl, which groups may be optionally substituted.

12. (new) The compound of Claim 11 represented by formula II, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or a prodrug thereof:



(II)

wherein

Z^1 represents an optionally substituted aryl or heteroaryl group, wherein heteroaryl is selected from the group consisting of pyridine, pyrrolidine, imidazole and thiophene; and

R^{13} represents phenyl or furanyl.

13. (new) The compound of Claim 12 wherein Z^1 represents cyanophenyl, formylphenyl, acetylphenyl, pyridinyl, cyano-thienyl or imidazolyl.

14. (new) A compound of Claim 12 wherein R^{13} represents phenyl or furanyl.

15. (new) A compound which is selected from:

6-(furan-3-yl)-3-[3-(pyridin-3-yl)phenyl]-3*H*-imidazo[4,5-*b*]pyridine;

1-[3-(6-(furan-3-yl)-3*H*-imidazo[4,5-*b*]pyridin-3-yl)phenyl]pyrrolidin-2-one;

6-(furan-3-yl)-3-[3-(imidazol-1-yl)phenyl]-3*H*-imidazo[4,5-*b*]pyridine;

6-(furan-3-yl)-3-[3-(morpholin-4-ylmethyl)phenyl]-3*H*-imidazo[4,5-*b*]pyridine;

6-phenyl-3-[3-(pyridin-3-yl)phenyl]-3*H*-imidazo[4,5-*b*]pyridine;

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or a prodrug thereof.

16. (new) A compound which is selected from:

1-[3′-(6-(furan-3-yl)imidazo[4,5-*b*]pyridin-3-yl)biphenyl-2-yl]ethanone;

3′-[6-(furan-3-yl)imidazo[4,5-*b*]pyridin-3-yl]biphenyl-2-carbaldehyde;

3′-[6-(furan-3-yl)imidazo[4,5-*b*]pyridin-3-yl]biphenyl-2-carbonitrile;

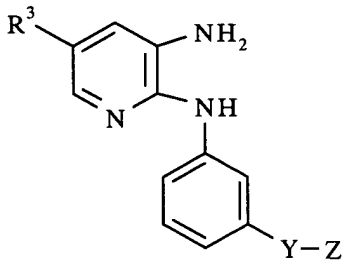
3-[3-(6-(furan-3-yl)imidazo[4,5-*b*]pyridin-3-yl)phenyl]thiophene-2-carbonitrile;

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or a prodrug thereof.

17. (new) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound of Claim 11 or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or a prodrug thereof and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

18. (new) A process for the preparation of the compound of Claim 11, which comprises:

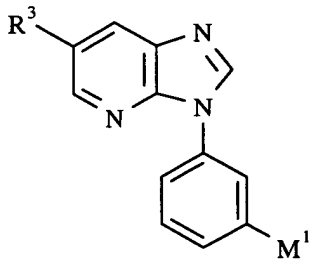
(A) reacting a compound of formula III:



(III)

wherein Y, Z and R^3 are as defined in Claim 11; with formic acid; or

(B) reacting a compound of formula VI with a compound of formula VII:

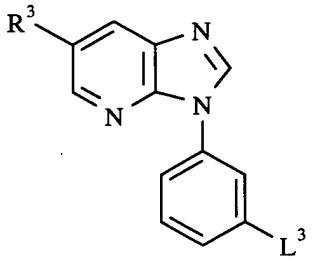


(VI)

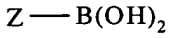
(VII)

wherein Z and R^3 are as defined in claim 1, L^2 represents a suitable leaving group, and M^1 represents a boronic acid moiety $-B(OH)_2$ or a cyclic ester thereof formed with an organic diol; in the presence of a transition metal catalyst; or

(C) reacting a compound of formula VIII with a compound of formula IX:



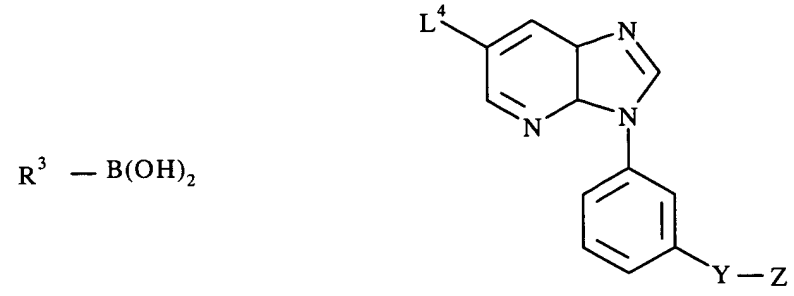
(VIII)



(IX)

wherein Z and R^3 are as defined in Claim 11, and L^3 represents a suitable leaving group; in the presence of a transition metal catalyst; or

(D) reacting a compound of formula X with a compound of formula XI:



(X) (XI)

wherein Y, Z and R^3 are as defined in Claim 11, and L^4 represents a suitable leaving group; in the presence of a transition metal catalyst.

19. (new) A method for the treatment of anxiety which comprises administering to a patient in need of such treatment an effective amount of the compound of Claim 11or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or a prodrug thereof.

20. (new) A method for the prevention of anxiety which comprises administering to a patient in need of such prevention an effective amount of the compound of Claim 11 or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or a prodrug thereof.